

OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES TRADE REPRESENTATIVE
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CONTACT: RICHARD MILLS/
RICARDO REYES
(202) 395-3230

Zoellick Notifies Congress of Progress on Global Trade Talks

WASHINGTON - United States Trade Representative Robert B. Zoellick yesterday formally notified Congressional leaders on the progress of negotiations to strengthen and extend, as well as establish new trade agreements under the auspices of the World Trade Organization (WTO). This notification is in accordance with the Trade Act of 2002.

“We will bring home a set of world trade agreements that enhances economic growth and prosperity in the United States and its trading partners (especially in the developing world, most notably in Africa) by reducing and eliminating barriers to trade,” wrote Zoellick in a letter. “We will also be seeking to strengthen the multilateral trading system and improve the operation of the WTO.”

Last November, the United States played a key role in launching a new round of world trade negotiations as part of the WTO Doha Development Agenda. These negotiations will open markets around the globe for American workers, farmers, and companies, with special emphasis on creating new export opportunities in agriculture, manufacturing, and services. The United States has already tabled substantial proposals to free up trade in services and agriculture, inject greater transparency into WTO procedures, and resolve a remaining issue for poorer countries that may need compulsory licenses for medicine to deal with epidemics, such as AIDS.

As part of the Administration’s ongoing consultative relationship with Congress, Zoellick sent letters to the Speaker of the House and the President Pro Tempore of the Senate. In October, Zoellick provided Congress with the formal notification for the Administration’s intent to enter into free trade negotiations with Morocco and five nations of Central America. In addition, Zoellick also notified Congress of the U.S. goals and objectives for completing ongoing free trade negotiations with Singapore and Chile and for the Free Trade Area of the Americas.

A copy of the letter can be found on the USTR website (www.ustr.gov).

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